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7 August 1956

REPORT TO THE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS
BY THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EXPLOITATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS

The Subcommittee on Exploitation of Foreign Language Publications has held regular semimonthly meetings over the past two and a half years in pursuit of its objective of a coordinated well-balanced program to meet the needs of the intelligence community. During the course of these activities the Subcommittee has carefully scrutinized current operations in the exploitation of foreign publications, exerted efforts to coordinate these various activities and encouraged the development of multilateral arrangements among the respective agencies which could reduce duplication and thus add to the over-all productivity of such exploitation. Numerous changes have been recommended by the Subcommittee as a result of its examinations, and implementation of these recommendations has resulted in a greater refinement of requirements; greater cooperation and understanding between agencies; closer working level relationships between the producers and the consumers; and reporting specifically designed to meet the needs of a majority of consumers.

Periodic reviews of Subcommittee-recommended programs have been conducted for the purpose of finding ways to meet the most urgent requirements of the consumers, since it was determined from the first review in 1953 that there was not sufficient manpower to meet all of the consumer needs. In the last review, each agency's needs were examined in the light of (1) the priorities of national intelligence as established in DCID 4/5; (2) needs for the same or similar information by more than one member; (3) the capacity of foreign language publications as a source to provide the information; (4) the relative priority accorded the requirements by the requesting agency; and (5) the degree to which sources other than foreign publications answer the needs of the community. In accordance with the review, a revised program has been drawn up on the basis of the most pressing needs of the community. The resulting program is attached as Appendix A.

One feature of the revised program is the selective abstracting and extracting from the Soviet Bloc scientific and technical literature of articles formally reporting research results and technical developments in subject fields of high priority interest. This represents a fundamental change from the program in effect during the past two years, a principal feature of which was the cover-to-cover abstracting of some 50 leading Soviet scientific and technical journals.

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In the discussions on the scientific and technical portion of the program, the Air Force member and the CIA alternate for scientific information felt that cover-to-cover abstracting was preferable to selective exploitation of a few priority subjects. However, in view of the compelling need of the majority of the members for selective abstracting, they concurred in endorsing the selective approach, at least until the next review of the program. The Air Force subsequently adjusted its own exploitation facilities to meet its particular abstracting needs and the Air Force member now states that this, combined with the present FDD program, meets its requirements.

Although there has been great cooperation and effort on the part of the various agencies to redefine and "pinpoint" their priority requirements, we have found that current exploitation facilities are insufficient to meet the needs of all the intelligence agencies for information from foreign language sources. This is more apparent now than at any time in the past due to the relaxation of Soviet controls over export of publications. A great many more source materials are now available than in the past (e.g., Soviet periodicals of intelligence value 510 titles in 1956 compared with 270 in 1953) and the publications contain more and better information.

Accordingly, we have enumerated in Appendix B in first, second, and third priorities those subjects and categories of requirements for which there is a confirmed need for additional source coverage and/or exploitation in greater depth by the intelligence community and which cannot be met by existing facilities.

In conclusion then the Subcommittee has carefully developed a program to maximize the utilization of currently available facilities on the highest priority needs of the community. However, with the increasing availability of Soviet Bloc publications and the increased information of intelligence value contained therein, priority needs still exist. There is therefore an urgent need to expand the effort on the exploitation of Soviet Bloc publications.

It is recommended that the Advisory Committee affirm the need for an expanded effort in the exploitation of Soviet Bloc publications.

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Chairman